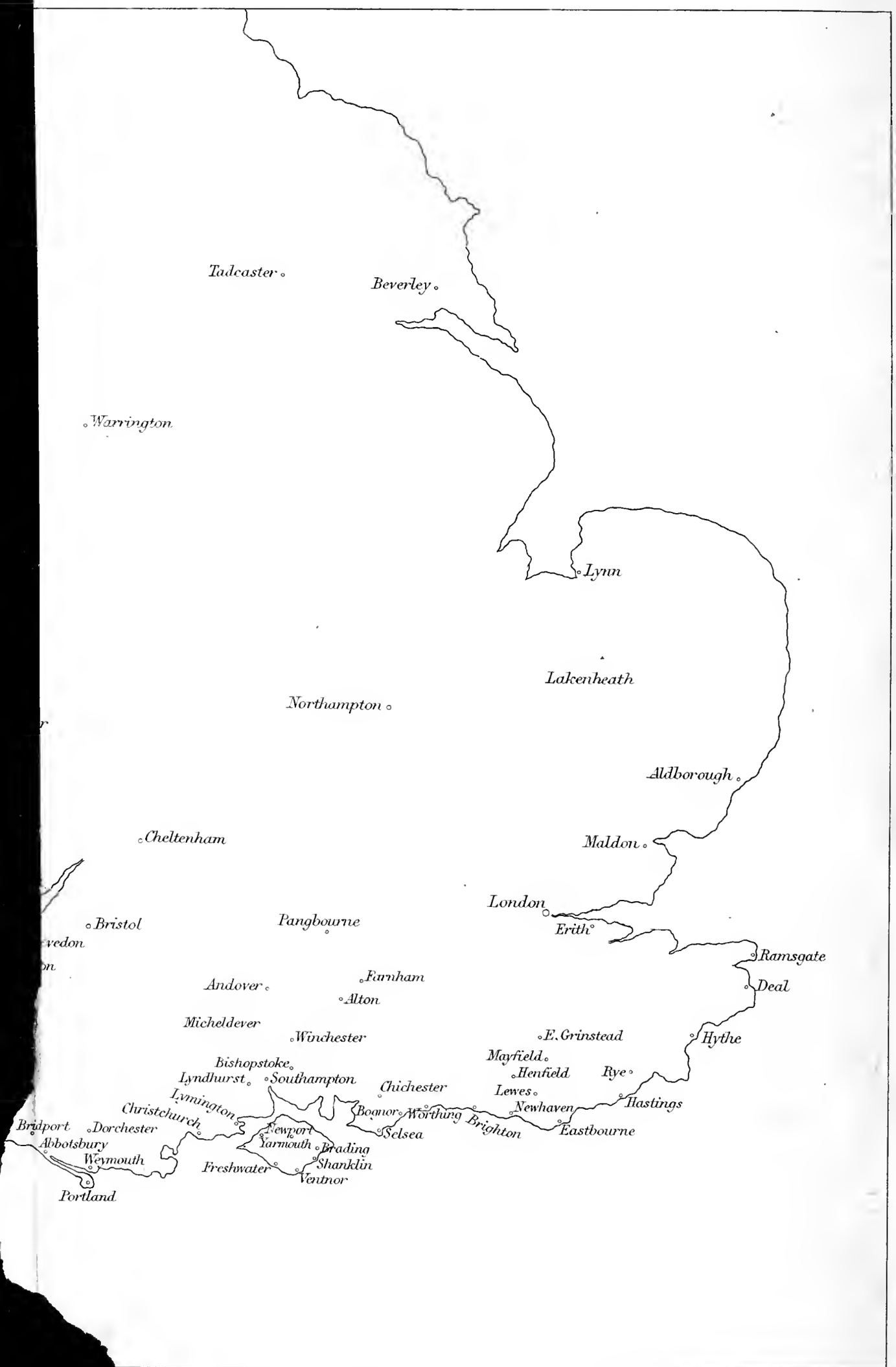
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Rye
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Southampton
Chichester
Lewes
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Christchurch
Bognor
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The Bank
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Sir

Permit me to inform you of the publication of my article on the Grey Phalarope.

Van Voorst, No 1.
Paternoster row will supply you or any other person with a copy on receipt of seven stamps

Believe me
Yrs truly
J H Gurney Jr

May 7th 1867 J. Couch

A

SUMMARY OF THE OCCURRENCES

OF

THE GREY PHALAROPE

IN

GREAT BRITAIN

DURING THE AUTUMN OF 1866.

BY

J. H. GURNEY, Jun.

LONDON:

JOHN VAN VOORST, 1 PATERNOSTER ROW.

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OCCURRENCES

OF

THE GREY PHALAROPE

(*Phalaropus lobatus*)

IN

GREAT BRITAIN.

Before I enumerate the Grey Phalaropes that were killed during September 1866, I have the following remarks to make.

With regard to the plumage, all were of course more or less in change, the older individuals still retaining the bay colour of the breeding-season in places, while birds of the year exhibited a singular mixture of their parents' respective seasonal garbs, the pearl-grey feathers appearing on the back, and a delicate tinge of buff being visible upon the throat.

The cause of the invasion must to a great extent continue a matter of conjecture; however, I think we may fairly surmise that the severe and premature gales which prevailed during September had something to do with it: it must be attributed to some such cause; icebergs came further south than had ever been known before.

The Table of dates is as follows:—

Aug. 20th .
„ 24th .
„ 29th ..
Sept. 1st
„ 2nd ..
„ 3rd .
„ 4th
„ 5th .
„ 6th
„ 7th
„ 8th .
„ 9th
„ 10th ...
„ 11th .
„ 12th .....
„ 13th
„ 14th ......
„ 15th ....
„ 16th .....
„ 17th ....
„ 18th ....
„ 19th ....
„ 20th ....
„ 21st ....
„ 22nd ....
„ 23rd ....
„ 24th ....
„ 25th ....

Sept. 26th
„ 27th
„ 28th ··
„ 29th ····
„ 30th ·
Oct. 1st
„ 2nd ·
„ 3rd
„ 4th ·····
„ 5th
„ 6th
„ 7th
„ 8th ·

The Red-necked Phalarope referred to in the 'Field' newspaper was shot by the Rev. John Jenkinson on Trescoe pond, upon one of the Scilly Islands. Mr. Rodd writes that it was an adult bird in winter plumage, showing an unsullied white throughout the under parts. It was described as looking exactly like a miniature duck, paddling and sometimes swimming about amongst the herbage and reeds, and, when not groping for food, carried its head well back on the shoulders.

Grey Phalarope.

Sussex.

As far as I know, the greatest number of Grey Phalaropes were obtained at Eastbourne, or at least in its immediate vicinity; and I do not infer that

Eastbourne had attractions for them beyond other places, so much as I attribute their seeming preference to the fact of that town being singularly well off in ornithologists. These gentlemen have so readily contributed assistance to this publication, that I am induced to believe a very uncommon interest has been taken in the matter. It would be most ungrateful to pass over this help; and I would particularly mention the great courtesy of Mr. Dutton. The following, therefore, ought to be very complete:—

Aug. 29th. Two shot and eaten by Mr. Cooper.

Sept. 2nd*. Two by the coastguard at Walsand.

„ 12th. One at Crumble pond by Mr. Cooper, and one shot on the highroad by Mr. Osborne.

14th. Mr. Vidler, one.

„ 15th. Twelve at Cuckmere haven†.

„ 17th. Four at the Crumble by the same gentleman, one at Pevensey by Mr. Vidler, and three at the same place by a coastguard, and one more at Bexhill.

„ 20th. One found in the marshes, two by Mr. Osborne at Eastbourne, and two at Cuckmere haven by Mr. Thompson.

* In the 'Zoologist,' "Sept. 7th," by error.

† Cuckmere river enters the sea just beyond Eastdeane, about five miles from Eastbourne by road—less by the coast, where you can walk only.

Sept. 21st. One by Mr. Vidler, one by the Walsand coastguard, one by the coastguard at Crumble pond.

„ 22nd. One by the Walsand coastguard.

„ 23rd. Nine by the Walsand coastguard, one of them half red.

„ 25th. Four at Cuckmere haven, and one beside a barn on Beachey Head, in company with ducks, by Mr. Bates.

No date. Ten shot by two brothers, Messrs. W. H. and F. Pott of Wimbledon.

These were almost all obtained in what are called "pells," little pieces of water on the high shingle which rise and fall with the tide, yet are seldom entirely dry. Their food small flies, little worms, and water-insects.

Round Hastings and St. Leonards I am able to record 35 Grey Phalaropes, twenty-eight of which were preserved by Mr. R. Kent.

Sept. 12th. One at the Nook, Rye harbour.

„ 15th. Three.

„ 17th. Two at the Nook.

„ 18th. Five.

„ 19th. Four at Bexhill.

„ 20th. Four.

„ 21st. Six. Bexhill, Bopeep, Pevensey.

„ 23rd. Three.

„ 24th. One killed by the telegraph-wires.

„ 25th. Two at Bopeep.

Date uncertain. Two.

,, Two at Rye.

Mr. Kent examined the stomachs of fifteen, of which eleven were males and four females; the stomachs of some of them contained a few sand-hoppers, very minute shells, and small pieces of green seaweed; only three out of the whole number had any fat upon them, and that was very little. The males all showed a little colour upon the neck, not much; the females were pure white. A flock of Grey Phalaropes were seen riding on the rough sea off the town and close inshore for some hours, which eventually passed on westward.

Worthing is next in number, and can boast fifteen Grey Phalaropes, the first of which was shot by Mr. Thomas Wells on the 5th of September, who also shot another on the 10th, and two more on the 12th; one was shot by Mr. Tompkins on the 20th, and another, the last, was obtained on the 25th; and I should mention that one was killed with a stone thrown by a little boy.

Mr. Swaysland at Brighton had sent him two Grey Phalaropes on the 20th of September, one on the 21st, three on the 22nd, and three on the 24th, to stuff for different parties. Also five others (*vide* 'Field') were shot at Brighton.

Thirteen at Chichester, viz. half a dozen exposed for sale in a poulterer's, Sept. 19th, which H. Willett, Esq. kindly informed me of; two shot at

Dell quay, and one caught in the ballast-hole, and four others mounted by the birdstuffer in St. Pancras, for the knowledge of which I return my thanks to Miss Julia Barker.

A young farmer named Woodlands shot seven Grey Phalaropes in Thorney marsh, Selsea, on the 18th of September.

Six were procured at Rye, independently of those sent to Hastings: I am informed, on good authority, that at this place they were literally thrown away; of the six taken to Mr. Gasson, one was shot rather cleverly by Master Frewen (September 15), and others (September 14th) near the iron bridge.

Mr. Willett shot five at Bishopstowe, near Seaford; and I will give an extract from his letter as a sample of many others:—"On Sunday, September 16th, my son and I were walking in the afternoon past the salt-water creek near Bishopstowe mills and about one mile east of Newhaven, where we saw five Grey Phalaropes; they were perfectly tame. Monday morning we went to the same place; my son took a single-barrelled gun with him: they were so tame that they remained perfectly quiet while he was reloading; *i. e.* he only killed one bird at a shot, and the remaining birds were not the least disturbed by the report of the gun."

At East Grinstead some persons caught a Grey Phalarope alive at a pond, September 26th; but it died shortly afterwards, and its wasted condition

showed it to have been starved. Two others (both immature) are in the hands of a birdstuffer. The above were communicated by Mr. W. May, who, with reference to the latter, which were shot on the 29th of September, says, "they were observed a day or two previous to frequent a pond; and when one was shot, the other, alarmed by the report of the gun, flew off, but, on finding its companion did not accompany it, immediately returned and alighted beside the dead bird, giving the gunner an opportunity of reloading and shooting it." Mr. Pratt has told me of one more, which was observed swimming in a pond close to Plawhatch, near East Grinstead, and was so tame that it allowed itself to be captured merely by a net being thrown over it.

At Siddlesham three Phalaropes, one of which was sold, I believe, to Mr. Jeffries, of Ratham mills, in the parish of Funtingdon.

Three in the birdstuffer's at Lewes.

A "looker," near Winchelsea, shot three Grey Phalaropes at once. Another was either so exhausted or tame as to be chased by a gunner near Winchelsea, and only a few yards off him; still he was tired first and lost the bird.

The birdstuffer at Bognor, as I was informed by Miss Barker, obtained two Grey Phalaropes; and the Worthing birdstuffer had one sent him thence.

One killed by Mr. Pratt near the Norfolk bridge, Shoreham; and a second, at the same place, by

Mr. G. R. Griffith, September 22nd: this bird was first seen among a flock of Dunlins, and when shot proved the finest of about a dozen which were at Mr. Pratt's house.

There are two Phalaropes at the Crown Hotel, Lewes; but where shot I cannot say.

Two Grey Phalaropes were shot at Mayfield on the 15th and 17th of September, and were recorded in the 'Mayfield Magazine' by the Rev. H. T. Murdock Kirby: one of them went to Mr. Pratt at Brighton, the other has been placed in a cage with two Pheasants.

One Phalarope shot by Mr. Fenner at Chinton, near Seaford, of which Mr. C. Barlow very kindly wrote to me.

One at Henfield, which, however, must have been included in Mr. Swaysland's nine.

One at West Grinstead*, knocked down with a stone as it flew from a pond; one at Balcombe; one at Rottingdeane, and one at Ovingdeane, for the knowledge of all which I have to thank Mr. Pratt (the Rottingdeane and Ovingdeane specimens in company with ducks on the village pond); one at Hailsham; one in a poulterer's at Littlehampton; one at Ashington; and, finally, one sent up from Sussex to John Gould, Esq., of London.

* West Grinstead is situated about halfway between Brighton and Horsham, and close to the river Adur.

Hants.

Mr. Brown shot a Grey Phalarope, about the middle of September, in one of the flooded marshes of Woodside, near Lymington, and, the day after, another. A gentleman has also very obligingly given me notice of three shot by him on the 10th of September, very near Lymington: there were twenty in the flock; but when he had obtained one sufficiently clean for stuffing, he desisted from shooting; and on the 18th he killed one with his walking-stick (on the wing) in a small marsh near Keyhaven (the late Col. Hawker's headquarters). Nine fell to the lot of another party at the same place, shot in a pond: into this pond, subject to tidal influence, a stream of fresh water constantly flows.

Mr. H. Rogers procured the following Grey Phalaropes at Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight:—

September 15th . . . . 2 }
„ 16th . . . . 5 } during a violent storm.
„ 18th 2
„ 21st 3

Mr. Hart has civilly acquainted me with nine Grey Phalaropes that were killed in the Christchurch meadows, and of two at Gore, a village a little distance from Christchurch, which were consorting with poultry in a farmyard. All were in good feather for preservation, but very poor.

Nine Grey Phalaropes were obtained in the neighbourhood of Southampton by Mr. Walter, birdstuffer; a tenth, knocked down with a stone on the mud by the western shore, was taken to Mr. Hendy*, and still another, which a dog caught in a garden at the back of a house in South front, Southampton, September 17th.

Six Grey Phalaropes were taken from Shanklin to Ventnor by a lady and gentleman to get stuffed.

Mr. Walter, of Winchester, had one Phalarope shot on the 10th of September at Micheldever, one on the 12th at Chilcomb, and one on the 18th near Itchingstoke. The Rev. J. D. Simmonds shot a fine specimen on the 18th, also at Chilcomb.

Mr. Lush, hairdresser, killed a pair of Grey Phalaropes at Ventnor in the first week of October; and the landlord of the Rose Inn informed me of a third.

Three Grey Phalaropes were obtained in the neighbourhood of Yarmouth, Isle of Wight.

On the 8th of September, A. W. Browne, Esq., to whom I am greatly indebted for information, shot a Grey Phalarope on the Aldershot canal, a male bird, an account of which he sent to the 'Aldershot Gazette.' On the 21st, G. Stonard,

* Mr. Hendy exhibited some stuffed birds at the Southampton poultry-show, and among them a Grey Phalarope, which was probably this individual. I beg to thank Mr. T. Goatley for my Southampton information.

Esq., found a Phalarope floating on the Basingstoke canal, and landed it with the point of his fishing-rod; an account of this was also sent to the 'Aldershot Gazette.'

Two were mentioned in the 'Surrey and Hants News' to have been taken alive between Alton and Bentley.

At Frensham pond one was shot, as I learn from Mr. Browne, on the 30th of September.

One at Lyndhurst, in the New Forest.

One at Andover, one at Bishopstoke, one in a farmyard at Brading, in the Isle of Wight, September 21st; one stoned by a National schoolboy on the edge of a moat at Stokes's Bay, close to Alverstoke. In the 'Field' there was mention of one shot at Newport, September 17th, and the writer speaks of their alighting by night on the window-sills and pecking against the glass, which sounds a little improbable.

Devon.

The Grey Phalaropes seem to have been made the most of at Plymouth. Mr. J. Gatcombe has been very obliging in sending information. Five were received by Mr. Blatchford for preservation, one by Mr. Bolitho, one received by Mr. Lucraft, which had been knocked down with a stone, and one by Mr. Rogers. There were two killed at St. Germains, the seat of Lord Elliot, one on a river, the other on a private pond. Mr. Gatcombe

shot four on the 14th, 18th, and 19th; one of these was a particularly fine female, strongly stained with red on the under surface. Two, which some men shot in Plymouth Sound, were purchased by Mr. Hingston. One knocked down with a paddle by a waterman, three more killed on the Sound, and two at Wrinkle Point (one of which last received a notice in the 'Plymouth Daily Mercury'), make up the total of twenty-two.

On Sunday, September 16th, Mr. H. Nicholls, jun., saw a Grey Phalarope swimming between the quays at the bottom of the town of Kingsbridge, precisely at the same place where he had killed one in May 1844. On the 18th Mr. Nicholls was riding across Thurlestone sands, near Kingsbridge, when he saw about fifty Grey Phalaropes swimming on the ley: he rode to a village hard by, and, having borrowed a gun, shot eighteen, most of which had small flies in their throats. A couple were sent to Mr. Nicholls from Dartmouth, and a single one from Kingsbridge road.

Nine Phalaropes have come under the observation of Mr. W. D'Urban, at Exeter, of which a poulterer named Seaward shot seven on the Exeter canal, and another was shot on the river Clyst, near its junction with the Exe, at Topsham, by a man employed at the Devon and West of England Company's Manure Works, September 20th.

Mr. R. Jowe, High Street, Barnstaple, had five

Grey Phalaropes, none of which were shot earlier than the 10th.

At Budleigh Salterton one was shot with a rifle off the shore on the 18th of September; two others had been shot for Stints shortly previous; on the 21st one was picked up in a dying state. Mr. William Broderick, my authority, in his courteous and obliging letter states his belief that it was an adult female; but the organs were very imperfectly developed, and the body much shrunk and decomposed when he got it. Of the two shot previously to the 18th, and of the one killed by the rifle, Mr. Broderick observes, "all were in nearly the same stage of plumage, about three parts winter plumage, having lost (the adult birds) the chestnut tints of the cheek and breast. . . . . A gentleman who was out fishing for some hours about fourteen miles from land, some ten days after their departure, tells me that many were then flying and resting on the water near his boat." The fact of the Phalaropes flocking was curious, and as such was named in the 'Zoologist' by Mr. Mathews; but Budleigh was by no means the only place where this was noticed. Mr. Broderick writes to me, "respecting the Grey Phalaropes which lately appeared on our shores, I did not notice them until a few days before they left (after some rough weather); there were about forty or fifty, in little parties of five or six, along the shore in front of the village, flying short

distances, and swimming just outside the first waves. I saw them the next day on the mud and shallow water at the mouth of the Otter; I did not attempt to shoot any, but watched them for some time."

Two shot at Tiverton were skinned by a blacksmith.

One shot by Mr. Still on the sands at Seaton, September 20th, and one picked up by a boy in a ploughed field at Brunscombe, September 29th.

Dorset.

In the county of Dorset I am able to record nineteen at Weymouth, viz. a dozen set up by Mr. Rolls, who declares a hundred must have come to his door; there were also some shot near Abbotsbury; and at Weymouth two were observed swimming in a ditch within a hundred yards of a much frequented road. Two of those Mr. Rolls did stuff were killed on the 19th of September by S. A. Pretor, Esq.; and two others additional were brought to a gentleman on the 21st, on which day a gunner brought Mr. W. Thompson five for sale. One at the Piddletrenthide Manor House on the 20th of September was recorded by Mr. Bingham, in Hardwicke's 'Science Gossip.'

A Grey Phalarope was obtained at Wareham, September 24th, on the property of E. Weld, Esq., who writes to me that about the same time he rose one in a turnip field.

One Grey Phalarope was shot by a shepherd at Whotecomb, two by the keeper of Herringston Manor, and one in Dorchester, one in Portland, (September 24th), and, lastly, one at Bridport, which the children of the Rev. Melville Lee caught alive in a field between that place and the harbour: while its wings adorn the young lady's hat, its sternum and cranium are in my collection.

Cornwall.

In some parts of Cornwall the Grey Phalaropes were abundant, especially at Falmouth, at which place a lad brought Dr. Bullmore as many as sixteen in his hat, which he offered at sixpence apiece. A flock of five were also shot off St. Anthony's lighthouse; these were annihilated by Mr. Gill on October 4th, a large shoal of pilchards being in the bay.

Two Grey Phalaropes, male and female, were shot in Marazion marsh, about two miles and a half east of Penzance, on the 14th of September, and sent to W. H. Vingoe, the well-known taxidermist of that place; three more were shot at Hayle, about seven miles from Penzance, but were not preserved; and another was shot on the Bodmin moors.

Mr. Clogg has given me notice of a Grey Phalarope he saw shot on the 15th of September, in Looe harbour, and of another killed with an oar the same day; there were three others killed, one of

them on the 19th, upon a freshwater pond about a mile inland. Of the five specimens all but one were young birds.

Somerset.

Two Grey Phalaropes were shot by Mr. Cox at the mouth of the river Axe, on the morning of the 21st of September. Two shot by Mr. Anderson and Mr. Ireland were recorded by the latter in the 'Field' newspaper, and also noticed in the 'Weston-super-Mare Gazette' and two other papers.

Mr. Cecil Smith has informed me of three Grey Phalaropes at Stolford, which is situated on the shore of the Bristol channel between Quartochshead and the mouth of the river Parrot.

Two were shot at Horfield near Bristol, one at Clevedon, one at Ilminster, and one on the 3rd of September, by Mr. A. Prangley, on a large pond adjoining the chemical works, St. Philip's marsh, Bristol.

Kent.

Four Grey Phalaropes were shot at Lydd.

Two were shot at Hythe upon the 19th and 24th of September, by a man named Norton, one of them on the edge of a sheet of water, and the other on an open green.

One shot at Sholden near Deal on the 20th of August, which I give on the authority of Mr. H. J. Harding, it being the earliest I have heard of.

One shot on a pond at Meopham, and recorded in a Gravesend newspaper, for a knowledge of which I am indebted to Mr. F. D. Power.

One seen swimming with Kittiwake Gulls, from the Ramsgate pier, September 28th, by an Eastbourne fisherman named Sayer.

One killed by a brickmaker at Erith.

Cumberland.

In Cumberland I am able to give four captures, thanks to J. Watson of Carlisle; they are much the most northern I have heard of. George Dawson got one (September 24th) near Allonby, and another person got two more there. Mr. Watson received the fourth on August 24th, a very early date.

Surrey.

On the 22nd and 24th of September, three specimens were placed in the hands of Mr. T. Mansell, birdstuffer, East Street, Farnham; these were shot respectively at Tilford, Millcourt, and Farnham, and were recorded in the 'Aldershot Gazette.'

Yorkshire.

I learn from Mr. Graham that at Tadcaster, in Yorkshire, one was shot on a manure-heap by a clergyman*, September 28th; and I have heard of a couple besides from the birdstuffer at Beverley, near Hull.

* The same gentleman shot a specimen in April.

Suffolk.

At Aldeburgh, in Suffolk, Fenwick Hele, Esq., procured two Phalaropes, both males, one on the 18th, the other on the 19th of September. On picking up the second specimen he was surprised to see something hanging out of its mouth, which turned out to be the breathing apparatus of the larvæ of the drone fly: these were mentioned in the 'Field.' A Phalarope was killed by the telegraph wires at Lakenheath, September 20th, which I heard indirectly went to Mr. Newcome, of Feltwell.

Cheshire.

I am indebted for the following notice to Mr. Moore, of Liverpool: "a specimen of the Grey Phalarope, immature, shot on Bidston Hill, near Birkenhead, by Mr. John Williams, of Claughton, Cheshire, September 19th, 1866, and mounted by R. Reynolds and Son (late of Thetford)." There was another shot at Warrington.

Middlesex.

One shot in Hackney marshes on the 20th of September ('Zoologist'), and one shot on the Thames close to Waterloo Bridge, which came to my knowledge through the courtesy of Mr. Power, who writes respecting it, "I was told that it was found early one morning swimming close to one of

the wharves; and upon being chased by some people in boats, it took to swimming out into the middle of the river, but did not fly; its swimming powers were so great that the people in the boats could not catch it, and, had not a gun been brought into use, it might possibly have escaped."

Norfolk.

As Mr. Stevenson has informed me, a single Phalarope was killed on the 22nd of September, on Swardiston common, where it had alighted in a small pond of water, and was knocked over by an old woman with a stick. This bird had a little buff on the throat, and was otherwise in a state of change. But a lad caught a second in a pool of water at Middleton, near Lynn, September 22nd, which Mr. Wilson informs me was an adult female.

Bedfordshire.

Mr. Eustace, a salesman of Newgate market, shot a Grey Phalarope on his farm in Bedfordshire, and took it up to London on the 29th of September.

Cambridgeshire.

Mr. Baker, of Cambridge, received a male specimen on the 4th of October that had been killed by the telegraph wires at Little Swaffham.

Essex.

In Essex, a single Grey Phalarope was killed on the Blackwater river so late as the 6th of October.

Oxfordshire.

A Grey Phalarope was shot by a fisherman on an eyot of the Thames between Pangbourne and Whitchurch on the 19th of September; its beak was full of small flies and gnats. Miss Flockton, the possessor, furnished me with these particulars; it was a female old bird, between summer and winter plumage.

Radnorshire.

W. de Winton, Esq., and Mr. Shaw, the Shrewsbury taxidermist, have courteously informed me of a Grey Phalarope which the gamekeeper of the former shot on the grouse-hills in Radnorshire, as it was swimming and diving in an artificial dam by some dwellings.

Gloucestershire.

J. H. Merritt, Esq., obtained a Grey Phalarope in the vicinity of Wotton-under-Edge.

Pembrokeshire.

The following letter is copied from Hardwicke's 'Science Gossip' for November. "The Grey Phalarope. About the middle of September last, during

the stormy weather which then prevailed, a Grey Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) made its appearance on a pond close to the house at Caldy Island, Pembrokeshire. It was very tame, but kept apart from the swans and ducks which frequented the pond, remaining there for several days, and was never seen but on the water. It swam with ease and dexterity, but with a 'jerky' motion, constantly nodding its head, and caught flies on the surface of the water with great rapidity. If approached too closely, it would take wing, uttering a sort of chirp, or whistle, and alight a few yards further off.—E. K. B."

I am unable to give the localities for a few of the Grey Phalaropes, viz. six stuffed by Gardner of High Holborn, one by Marrott of King William Street, two by Shepherd of Hare Walk, &c., all in London.

Printed by TAYLOR and FRANCIS, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street.